631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that [563] of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 The fact is that the whole social body exists only 596 through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names

1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
769 thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
778 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[187 361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In [822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its [563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

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In some villages, the sacrificer never consumes butter or milk, foods which the Peul furnish the Bambara.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

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The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer tolerated in his native village (1).

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1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

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As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective), of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

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When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are, by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2).

2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 ●563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

614 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a
564 Peul "fula fantan' (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is in
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1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

potestate.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called furu-ba fla-u, "Peul of the furu-ba." These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the furu-ba dyon'; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were furu-ba fla-a by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). The furu-
● [563] ba fla-u speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin.

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the furu-ba dyon' were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

131 At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime
162 [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To
● [563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed
619 in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

[9] B. Population Movement

162 In 1912, Delafosse in Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger] gave a total of 538,450 [516] Bambara in the following regions:

Bamako . . .	146,966	Bougouni . . .	104,216	Ségou . . .	109,758
Sikasso . . .	30,000	Kita	2,339	Bafoulabé	2,100
Koutiala. . .	30,035	Goumbou. . . .	22,110	San . . .	20,103
Sokolo . . .	19,996	Djenné	17,246	Niafunké..	16,000
Nioro . . .	9,355	Mopti . . .	7,277	Bandiagara	928

161 All of these figures are notably lower than current ones. However, one must not infer a population increase too hastily. The difference in population figures result of better census methods rather than of a real increase.

Moreover, current demographic information must be considered as still approximate. In fact, censuses may go on for several years in a single region, and those of certain cantons are not yet finished. A large part of the population still avoids the census in order to escape taxes and military service. In certain villages the clandestine population may be as large as the declared population.

167 A number of the Bambara who leave the country temporarily as migratory workers in Guinea, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast escape all registration.

161 563 Finally, as soon as we leave the purely Bambara region of the Ségou circle to go into the region of Bougouni, for example, a large part of the population counted as Bambara is in fact of mixed origin, Foula, Malinké, but follows Bambara custom, often no longer speaking the language.

563 This simple enumeration shows how rare it is to find a Bambara ethnic bloc which is not heavily mixed with other tribes. This dispersion is doubtless the result of a complicated historical evolution as we shall see further on.

But we can already point out that the link which unites the different peoples is the chefferie. The different peoples under a common chief little by little consider themselves to be of the same people as their chief. Sometimes the chief may have adopted the nationality of the country whose direction he has assumed.

As an indication, we give the following tables, furnished by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the rates of births and deaths nor to establish

[text continues on p. 13]

463 554 [326] The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters. The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326] [527] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

463 326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to